DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 198 446 CG 014 980

AUTHOR Fulton, Ann: And Others
TITLE Attitudes and Opinions of Caprock High School Students and Dropouts.
INSTITUTION Team Resources for Youth, Inc., Amarillo, Tex.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Labor, Washington, D.C.: Office of Youth Development (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 77p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement: *Dropout Attitudes: Dropout Research: *Dropouts: Extracurricular Activities: Family Problems: *Parent Background: Potential Dropouts: Secondary Education: *Student Attitudes: Student Needs: Surveys: *Youth Problems
IDENTIFIERS *Chicanos

ABSTRACT

Team Resources for Youth (TRY) is an agency which works with dropouts and students experiencing difficulty in school. To gain insight in dealing with local youth, TRY conducted an investigation of student attitudes at Caprock High School in Amarillo, Texas. One questionnaire was administered to 746 students and a second questionnaire was completed by 64 of the 362 dropouts contacted. Over 70% of the school population was Caucasian, and 25% was Chicano. Chicanos dropped out at a higher rate than Caucasians, girls dropped out more frequently than boys, and most who left did so in the tenth grade. Most students who remained in school reported positive attitudes about their school and felt they would be well-prepared for college or work after graduation. One-fourth of the students were not involved in school-sponsored activities; dropouts had a very low involvement rate. Over half of the students' parents had graduated; however, Chicano parents had a much lower graduation rate. One-third of the students had a sibling who had dropped out: Chicanos and students whose parents had dropped out were overly represented in this group. Low academic performance was cited as the major reason for leaving school, with family conflict, student pregnancy, and financial problems reported as additional reasons. (NRB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED198446

ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS OF CAPROCK HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND DROPOUTS

Ann Fulton

Randi DeVine
Frank Hernandez
Paul Leasure
Donna Luna
Susan Thurston
Tim Weaver

TEAM RESOURCES FOR YOUTH

Amarillo, Texas
1980

CG 014980

The funds for this research project were made possible through the Youth Development Bureau and the Department of Labor.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ann Fulton

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research team would like to acknowledge the assistance of several people who were involved in the conduct of this project. Our thanks to Dr. Robert Beckley, Head of the Sociology and Social Work Department at West Texas State University, for his guidance and assistance throughout this project. Dr. H. Paul Chalfant, Chairperson of the Sociology Department at Texas Tech University, was instrumental in having the information from the surveys computerized. The administration and office staff at Caprock High School were patient, cooperative, and helpful in providing information which the team needed to complete this survey. Larry Watson, Executive Director of Team Resources for Youth, and Claudia Stuart, Youth Employment Coordinator, were supportive, helpful and encouraging to the research team throughout this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS..... ii

LIST OF TABLES..... v

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS..... v

I. INTRODUCTION..... 1

II. THE PROBLEM..... 2

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY..... 3

IV. CAPROCK STUDENT SURVEY..... 3

- Scope and Limitations..... 3
- Description of the Sample..... 4
- Attitudes About School Reputation and Activities..... 6
- Students' Plans After Leaving School and Students' Perceptions of their Preparedness for Future Goals..... 9
- Vocational Training, Job Applications and Employment..... 10
- Attitudes About Attending School..... 14
- Attitudes About Discipline..... 18
- Students' Perceptions of Potential Resource People for Help with School Problems..... 21
- Reasons for Dropping Out and Potential Resource People..... 22
- Family Profiles of Caprock High School Students..... 24
- Awareness About Team Resources for Youth, Inc..... 28

V. CAPROCK DROPOUT SURVEY..... 29

- Introduction..... 29
- Scope and Limitations..... 30
- Description of the Population..... 32
- Description of the Sample..... 36
- Employment..... 38
- Reasons for Dropping Out and Resource People Utilized for this Problem..... 39
- Involvement in Activities..... 46
- Educational Plans and Satisfaction with dropping out..... 48
- Family Profiles of Caprock Dropouts..... 49

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS..... 53

APPENDIX

Caprock Student Questionnaire..... 59
Caprock High School Survey of
Non-Graduating Students..... 64
Profiles of the Research Team..... 67

LIST OF TABLES

1. Importance of Activities compared with Student Involvement..... 8
2. Plans After Leaving School Compared to Students' Perceptions of How Well Prepared They Will Be..... 11
3. Student Satisfaction with Performance in School compared to Race and Sex..... 17
4. Fairness and Consistency of Discipline as Compared to Sex, Grade, and Ethnicity..... 20
5. People that Students Might Contact About School Problems..... 21
6. Possible Reasons Students Might Leave School..... 23
7. Description of Caprock Population, Caprock Dropouts and Caprock Dropout Respondents, by Percentages..... 33
8. Rate of Dropouts when Compared to all 10-12 Grade Students..... 35
9. Reasons for Leaving School as Reported by the Dropouts..... 42
10. Reasons for Leaving School as Determined by Caprock Administration for 10-12 Grade Dropouts..... 43
11. Involvement in School Activities by Caprock Students and Dropouts..... 47
12. Occupations of Parents of Caprock Dropouts..... 52

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1. Characteristics of the Sample and Total Caprock Population..... 5
2. Dropout Rate of Students' Siblings as Compared to Parents' Educational Level..... 26
3. Characteristics of the Dropout Study Respondents..... 37
4. Types of Jobs and Wages of Dropouts..... 40
5. Comparison of the Parents' Educational Level with Caprock Dropouts and Caprock Students' whose Siblings have Dropped Out..... 50

I. INTRODUCTION

School climate and home environment are important in regard to a person's commitment to stay in school and have a successful experience there. Team Resources for Youth, (TRY), an agency working to bridge gaps in social services for youth, frequently works with persons in difficulty at school or those who have left school without graduating and are having problems fitting into the community scene. TRY felt a need for information which would give additional insight in dealing with youth in the local area.

The research project, sponsored by TRY, was envisioned as an attempt to determine attitudes and opinions of students at one of the local Amarillo high schools. The focus of concern was the students' feelings about their school and home. Additional goals were to provide youth employment through a project funded by the Youth Development Bureau of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, to gain information which would be helpful to TRY in its work with youth in Amarillo, and to investigate areas about their school which concerned the youth employees.

Within the context of the study, the youth, with the aid of the research coordinator, identified needs, set goals and objectives, developed strategies, and acted to integrate findings into the appropriate systems. The youth employees designed questions, analyzed data and disseminated information in the

form of this final report. The results will be shared with the school administration and may be used to indicate areas where the school seems to be meeting needs or those where change may be indicated.

Caprock High School, Amarillo, Texas, was chosen as the site for the survey. It was selected because it was felt that the administration would have a generally cooperative attitude about the study. The project was begun in February 1980 and concluded in July of the same year.

The total project was divided into two sections: a survey of dropouts (persons who left school before graduating and did not transfer to another school), and a questionnaire administered to the general Caprock student population.

II. THE PROBLEM

There is a lack of definitive information about the attitudes of students concerning their schools and what factors are involved in establishing or maintaining a supportive school climate, one which is conducive to encouraging learning and constructive social relationships. It appears that there are inadequate methods of intervention which would deter students from leaving school prior to graduating. Individuals who do not have a high school diploma have limitations on the options which are available to them in the future.

Youth are usually not involved in the development processes and decisions concerning situations which affect their lives. They frequently do not have the opportunity to

participate, and therefore do not have an occasion to learn the skills which are needed in order to make changes in situations which are of interest to youth.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will set forth some of the attitudes of Caprock students. The results will provide information to the school which can be used to compare and update the school's information from previous studies and perhaps suggest areas in which Caprock is functioning well and others where changes might be indicated. The project will enable youth employees to learn and utilize skills and to demonstrate that they can accomplish what they set out to do. Information will be available to TRY concerning the profile of students at Caprock High School, as well as data from the dropout study which will be of interest to TRY, since it serves a high risk population.

IV. CAPROCK STUDENT SURVEY

Scope and Limitations

The questionnaires were constructed based on topics selected by the student employees and the research coordinator. The instrument was to be administered to all students, and questions were designed to be applicable to the general student population. The instrument was approved by school officials before it was administered.

Seven hundred forty-six, out of an enrollment of approximately 1,100 students on that date, answered the questionnaire

for a return rate of 68 percent. The daily absentee rate at the school averages about 12-15 percent. The survey was administered May 12, 1980, under teacher supervision during homeroom period. The announcement given to the teachers, along with the questionnaires, assured the students of anonymity and confidentiality. Completion of the survey was optional for the students. The results of this study cannot be generalized to any other population and the instrument has not been utilized on any other population.

Description of the Sample

The students who completed the survey comprised a sample which was consistent with the profile of the total school population in regard to sex, grade, and race/ethnicity as shown in Figure 1.

Of the 746 students who completed the survey, 400 (54 percent) were males and 343 (46 percent) were females. According to grade level, 39 percent of those answering were sophomores, 34 percent juniors, and 26 percent seniors. Seventy-two percent of the respondents were white, while chicanos* comprised 24 percent, 2 percent were black, and another 2 percent were of other ethnic groups.

Because the number of students who were in the racial categories of "blacks" and "others" comprise such a small percentage

---

*Youth employees believed the term "chicano" was the term of choice used by those of Mexican American background at Caprock. That terminology was used throughout this study.

FIGURE 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE AND TOTAL CAPROCK POPULATION

SEX	Questionnaire Respondents	Male 54%	Female 46%	
	School Population	Male 54%	Female 46%	
RACE/ ETHNICTY	Questionnaire Respondents	Whites and Others 74%	Chicano 24%	Black 2%
	School Population	Whites and Others 73%	Chicano 25%	Black 2%
GRADE	Questionnaire Respondents	Sophomore 39%	Junior 34%	Senior* 26%
	School Population	Sophomore 42%	Junior 32%	Senior* 25%

* Percentages may not add up to 100 on several tables and figures because of rounding of numbers and "no answers" are omitted from tables.

of the total Caprock population, the results reported in this study frequently do not reflect the responses of these persons.

Attitudes About School Reputation and Activities

Students were asked to rate Caprock's reputation in comparison with other high schools and, according to the survey, most students had a positive attitude about Caprock's reputation. Nineteen percent rated the reputation as excellent, while 47 percent indicated it was good, and an additional 18 percent felt the reputation was adequate. Only 16 percent gave the school a negative rating of fair or poor.

Females tended to have the most positive attitude about their school's reputation as demonstrated by 70 percent of the females who rated Caprock as having an excellent or good reputation, while 64 percent of the males felt this way. Seniors tended to rate it higher than did students from the other grades. Twenty-eight percent of the seniors rated the reputation as exellent. Twelve percent of the juniors and 20 percent of the sophomores gave it that high rating. There was apparently little difference in attitude, based on race/ethnicity, in regard to Caprock's reputation.

School sponsored acitivites are generally considered to be an important and integral part of high school life. In response to the question concerning the importance of school activities to the individual, 69 percent of all students thought they were very or fairly important. Eighteen percent believed they were somewhat important, while 13 percent indicated activities were not very important or not important at all to them.

There was no noticeable difference in the students' opinions, concerning the importance of school activities, based on ethnicity or grade levels. However, females placed more importance on school activities than males did. Seventy-three percent of the females responded that activities were very or fairly important, while 66 percent of the males felt this way. This trend was also demonstrated in the negative responses where 16 percent of the males rated activities as being not very or not at all important, while only 9 percent of the females responded in the same manner.

It is interesting to note that 23 percent of all students were not involved in any school sponsored activities, while 36 percent were in only one. Twenty-three percent participated in two activities, and 18 percent were actively involved in three or more. The number of activities that the individuals of each grade level participated in varied only slightly. The most significant difference was that a greater number of seniors were involved in three or more activities than at any other grade level.

Whites participated slightly more in school activities than did chicanos. Nineteen percent of the whites were involved in three or more school activities, whereas only 14 percent of chicanos were involved at that level. Thirty-two percent of all chicanos were inactive in school related organizations, as compared to twenty percent of whites. Only a few more females participated in school sponsored activities than did males. Forty-three percent of the females were involved in two or more

activities, whereas 40 percent of the males joined at that rate.

The research team wanted to compare the students' stated opinions about the importance of activities with actual participation in activities by those same individuals (Table 1).

TABLE 1

IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVITIES COMPARED WITH STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVITIES	NUMBER OF ACTIVITES IN WHICH STUDENTS WERE INVOLVED, BY PERCENT			
	0	1	2	3 or more
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Very important	14	26	39	67
Fairly important	32	38	40	30
Somewhat important	25	23	16	2
Not very important	19	11	6	0
Not at all important	10	3	0	1
Total % Responding	100	102	103	100

It is probably significant to note that 46 percent of the students who actually were not participating in any activities at all, rated activities as being very important or fairly important to them. However, persons involved in three or more activities demonstrated consistency between attitude and action. Ninety-seven percent of those involved students rated activities as being very or fairly important to them.

Students' Plans After Leaving School and Students' Preceptions of Their Perparedness for Future Goals

The Caprock students were asked what they planned to do within the first year after they leave school. The phrasing of the question was purposely designed to include those who did not plan to graduate. Many individuals checked more than one answer. The most frequently checked response was to go to work (361 responses). Three hundred eight had plans to attend college and 84 planned to enroll in trade or vocational schools. Seventy-eight students indicated they planned to be married and an additional 48 thought they would be joining the military. Ninety-one indicated they were unsure of their plans for the year after they left school. An additional twenty responses itemized other plans which were not categorized on the survey.

In conjunction with the preceding question, students were asked how important they thought the things they were learning in school now, would be for their later life. Overall results suggest that most students at Caprock felt what they were learning now would be helpful to them later. Approximately 30 percent of the students responded to each of these choices: very important, quite important and somewhat important. The more negative responses, slightly important and not at all important, were checked on only 12 percent of the questionnaires. The student responses to the question were cross-tabulated by grade level, by ethnicity and by sex. No significant differences were discovered through these cross tabulations.

When asked how well the students thought they would be prepared to do what they plan at the time they leave Caprock, 45 percent had a positive attitude and felt they would be well prepared for the future. An additional 17 percent were even more positive and said they would be very well prepared. Thirty-four percent stated they would be somewhat prepared, but 4 percent of the students had a negative attitude and responded that they felt they would be poorly prepared or not at all prepared to carry out their plans after they leave school. There was very little apparent difference in attitude about preparedness when a comparison was made based on sex, ethnicity, and grade level.

Table 2 outlines the students' plans after they leave school, as compared to their perception of how well prepared they will be. Approximately two-thirds of the students said they felt they would be very well or well prepared to do what they planned when they left Caprock. However, only 54 percent of those who intended to go to trade or vocational schools felt the same degree of confidence in how well prepared they would be.

Vocational Training, Job Applications and Employment

Thirty percent of the 746 respondents to the Caprock questionnaire were enrolled in a work study or vocational program, while 69 percent had not participated in one of these programs this year. Most of these courses were available only to juniors and seniors who comprised 60 percent of the total school population at the time the study was done.

TABLE 2

PLANS AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL AS COMPARED TO STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOW WELL PREPARED THEY WILL BE

(Percent of students who hold these attitudes)

	Very Well or Well Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Poorly or not at all Prepared	Total Responding
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Attend College	67	31	3	101
Go To work	67	30	3	100
Get married	69	21	4	94
Go to Trade School	54	43	2	99

Since these are largely programs at the junior and senior level, it is more significant to note that 45 percent of the seniors and 36 percent of the junior students were involved in one of these programs. A small number of sophomores (15 percent) indicated they were enrolled. In this study there was no provision included to check the accuracy of these responses against school enrollment figures.

There seemed to be little difference in the attitude of students, based on involvement in a work/vocational program, as it applied to their judgement of how well prepared they would be when they left school.

The opportunity of students to learn about job applications and interviewing, as a part of the school curriculum, was a subject investigated by the research team. When asked if they felt it was important to learn about job applications, 92 percent of the students responded positively and said they felt that it was important. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated they had received this type of education in school.

As would be expected, more seniors had received instruction with 73 percent of them answering positively. However, this is well below the rate of importance that the general student population placed on these skills (92 percent). Fifty-eight percent of sophomores and the same portion of juniors reported that they had been instructed in these skills.

In regard to the question concerning the importance of job applications, there was little difference in attitude based on grade levels and ethnicity. However, females tended to rate

the importance of these skills slightly higher than did males, 97 percent to 88 percent respectively.

An attempt was made to determine if students who were in a work study or vocational program felt any different from other students about the importance of learning about interviewing and job applications in school. The study showed there was no difference in attitude when compared to the criterion listed above.

Forty-one percent of the students who reported that they had already received instruction through the school in the skills needed in applying for a job were involved in a work/vocational program. Students who reported having instruction in these skills, but who were not involved in a work/vocational program, comprised 59 percent. It is also important to note that 14 percent of the students in vocational programs said they had not received this type of instruction.

In order to get a better profile of the Caprock population, students were asked if they had been employed during this school year. Seventy-five percent of the respondents said they presently had a job or have had one during the school year. The remainder indicated that they had not held a job during the year. This indicates what appears to be a relatively high degree of employment by the students. No attempt was made to determine the length of employment or the number of hours worked by the students.

According to the survey, a large percentage of seniors (90 percent) responded that they held a job sometime during the

school year, while 78 percent of the juniors and 61 percent of the sophomores had been employed as well. There was no significant difference in employment level based on students' ethnicity. However, as might be expected, the employment level was higher for male than for female students, 82 percent compared to 66 percent respectively.

Students were asked to indicate the reasons they worked, if they worked. The respondents could check more than one answer. The most responses (246) were for the category that indicated students were employed to meet their recreational needs. The next most frequently checked answer was that they worked to buy their clothes and school supplies (207 responses). One hundred eight indicated that one of the reasons they worked was for the experience, while 106 indicated they were employed for other reasons not categorized. Students' working to help support their families was apparently not an important motivation for employment for many students. However, there were sixty-five youth who indicated that their help was needed for family support.

Attitudes About Attending School

Caprock students responded to the question asking what were the major reasons they attended school. They were to choose one or more reasons which were important to them. The most frequently chosen response of the 746 students who answered the questionnaire was that they were in school to get an education. Five hundred seventy-six felt this way. The next most important reason was to prepare for a job which was

checked by 279 students. To be with their friends was indicated as being important by 202 individuals, while 150 felt it was important to be in activities. Ninety-six said they attended because their parents made them and 93 because attendance was required by law.

Related to the question regarding reasons for attending school was another item which sought their responses about whether or not school was the best way for them to be spending their time. Four hundred ninty-eight students (67 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that going to school was the best way to be spending their time. Although 97 (13 percent) of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed and 145 (19 percent) did not know whether or not it was the best way to be spending their time now.

Results of the survey indicate that as the students reach a higher grade level their feelings become more positive about school being the best way they can spend their time. It was not determined whether this phenomena was due to a change in the individual's attitudes or to the fact that the persons with the more negative attitudes have left school before they reach the higher grade levels. When considering the most positive categories they could check, strongly agree or agree, 64 percent of the sophomores, 66 percent of the juniors, and 73 percent of the seniors indicated that this was the way they felt. Of the students who disagreed or strongly disagreed that being in school was the best way to spend their time, 13 percent were sophomores, 16 percent were juniors and 9 percent

seniors. Quite a number of students indicated they had not made up their minds about this question, around 20 percent of each class, although it was slightly more of the sophomores and slightly less of the juniors and seniors.

There was no demonstrated difference in attitude about whether or not school was the best way to be spending their time when compared to ethnicity. However, there was quite a difference in feeling based on the sex of the respondent. Generally speaking, the girls were more satisfied about spending their time at school than the boys were. Seventy-five percent of the females and 61 percent of the males strongly agreed or agreed that going to school was the best way to be spending their time. Slightly more males than females, 22 percent as compared to 17 percent, were uncertain about their feelings concerning the subject. The results showed that 17 percent of the male respondents felt it was a negative way to be spending their time and 9 percent of the females had the same opinion.

In response to the question which asked how satisfied students were with their performance in school, the results indicated that a plurality, 46 percent, said they were very or fairly satisfied and 33 percent were satisfied. However, negative responses indicated that there were 20 percent of the students who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their performance in school. It is note worthy that one out of five students have a negative attitude about the quality of their school performance.

Table 3 indicates a comparison between the students' satisfaction with school performance by both ethnicity and sex. As a rule females were more satisfied with their accomplishments in school than males. In the comparison between satisfaction with school performance and race, approximately equal numbers of whites and chicanos rated their performance positively. However, the level of satisfaction with their accomplishments decreased for the chicanos as compared to the whites at the middle and lower ratings.

TABLE 3

STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH THEIR PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOL AS COMPARED TO RACE AND SEX

(Percent of student who hold the following attitudes)

Degree of Satisfaction with their performance	Ethnicity		Sex	
	Chicano	White	Male	Female
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Very Satisfied	9	11	8	13
Fairly Satisfied	36	35	32	39
Satisfied	28	35	35	31
Dissatisfied	23	16	21	13
Very Dissatisfied	4	3	4	2
Total % Responding	100	100	100	98

The survey included an item which was related to the students' opinions about school performance. The student was asked how often he or she did the best work he was able to do at school. The replies were somewhat positive in that 47 percent felt they did their best work always or most of the time. About 39 percent replied that they sometimes did the best work they were able to do. On the other hand, 14 percent of the students replied that they seldom or never did the best work they could have accomplished at school. This study did not include any cross checking of the student's ability as compared to school performance but only asked for the student's attitudes.

It was interesting to note the difference in replies between the boys and girls in regard to this question. Fifty-three percent of the girls indicated that they did their best work always or most of the time, while the boys demonstrated a more casual attitude toward school work by saying that only 41 percent of the time did they perform at that level. Grade level did not seem to be an influencing factor and ethnicity had very little relationship either to the attitudes of the students concerning that question.

Attitudes About Discipline

School discipline is a subject which is important to students, parents, school officials, and the community. The students were asked two questions concerning discipline at Caprock: the degree of fairness and the degree of consistency.

The responses demonstrate that they felt the discipline was usually more fair than consistent at Caprock. Forty-seven percent of the 746 respondents felt discipline was always or usually fair, while only 39 percent responded with the same degree of positiveness concerning consistency of the discipline. This trend is also apparent in the negative responses where 19 percent claimed discipline was seldom or never fair, as compared to 27 percent who answered with the same negative attitude concerning consistency of the discipline.

Table 4 outlines the students' views of the fairness and consistency of discipline as compared to sex, grade level and ethnicity. Generally speaking, the girls at the school had a higher opinion of the fairness of the school discipline than the boys did. They also felt that the discipline was more consistent than the way the boys viewed it, but the difference of opinion was not as great on that subject. Seniors tended to have a more positive attitude about the fairness of discipline than either of the other classes. They also held the most positive position in regard to the consistency of discipline at Caprock. Results indicate that chicanos gave the consistency of discipline a higher rating than the whites did but the attitudes were reversed in regard to fairness of discipline.

TABLE 4

A. FAIRNESS OF DISCIPLINE AS COMPARED TO SEX, GRADE AND ETHNICITY

(Percent of students who hold the following attitudes)

	Always or Usually Fair	Sometimes Fair	Seldom or Never Fair	Total Responding
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
SEX				
Male	44	31	25	100
Female	54	33	14	101
GRADE				
Sophomore	48	32	20	100
Junior	40	35	25	100
Senior	59	28	13	100
ETHNICITY				
White	49	32	19	100
Chicano	45	32	23	100

B. CONSISTENCY OF DISCIPLINE AS COMPARED TO SEX, GRADE AND ETHNICITY

(Percent of students who hold the following attitudes)

	Always or Usually Fair	Sometimes Fair	Seldom or Never Fair	Total Responding
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
SEX				
Male	37	31	32	100
Female	42	36	21	99
GRADE				
Sophomore	39	33	28	100
Junior	35	34	32	101
Senior	47	34	20	101
ETHNICITY				
White	38	32	30	100
Chicano	44	36	20	100

Students' Perceptions of Potential Resource People for Help with School Problems

As a part of the survey, the youth were asked to indicate which of the people at Caprock they would go to if they had a problem in school. There was opportunity for the students to list more than one person who would be available to them at the school.

The results, as shown in Table 5, emphasize the importance of the opinions of peers, since by far the most frequent choice was to talk with a friend (409 responses). The teacher or vice principal categories were fairly close in the number of times chosen and they were more frequent choices than counselors or coaches. The principal was viewed as the least likely person to be contacted by the students. A very significant circumstance is demonstrated by 90 students who replied they would not discuss their school problem with any of the individuals available to them at school.

TABLE 5

PEOPLE THAT STUDENTS MIGHT CONTACT ABOUT SCHOOL PROBLEMS

Total Number of Students Responding	744*
People Who Might be Contacted	Number of Responses
Friend	409
Teacher	151
Vice Principal	142
Counselor	107
Coach	84
Principal	34
No one	90

*It was impossible for students to check more than one category.

Reasons for Dropping out and Potential Resource People

Students were asked to check reasons which they felt might influence them to drop out of school, if that specific situation happened to them. They could check any number of items. The most frequently chosen reason, which might cause them to drop out, was indicated by 281 students who said they might quit if they were failing too many subjects. Table 6 outlines the students' opinions regarding the various reasons for leaving school. The second most common reason to drop out, in the opinion of Caprock students, would occur if they could get a job and needed money. Quitting because their parents wanted the student to leave, was rated about equally with family arguing and fighting as causative reasons for leaving school. They indicated that school discipline problems would also cause quite a number of students to leave school. One hundred thirty girls said that if they were pregnant, it would be sufficiant reason to drop out. If they were to get married,177 students indicated they would quit but boys felt a greater necessity to leave school under those conditions than the girls did, 106 compared to 71 respectively. A few of the youth alluded to a great dependency on friends by saying they would leave if their best friends quit attending school.

Since Team Resources for Youth frequently works with youth who are either contemplating leaving or have left school, the students were asked with whom they would talk if they were thinking of dropping out of school. It was possible to check more than one response. Four hundred forty-seven replied they would

TABLE 6

POSSIBLE REASONS STUDENTS MIGHT LEAVE SCHOOL

Total Number of Students Responding	744*
Reason for Leaving	Number of Responses
Failing too many subjects	281
Needed money and could get a job	193
Parents want student to leave school and work	153
Family arguing and fighting	152
School discipline problems	137
Marriage	177
Pregnancy (girls answer only)	130
Best friends quit school	32

*It was possible for students to check more than one answer.

discuss the problem with family members, while the next most frequently chosen category was to confide in friends (303 responses). One hundred sixteen would go to their principal or vice principal, while nearly as many (106) would see a counselor and 90 replied they would discuss it with a teacher. Twenty respondents indicated they would contact other categories of persons not listed on the survey. An additional 80 people said that they would not talk to anyone concerning their decision.

There were slightly more than 1,100 total responses from the 734 students who answered that question, but of those, only 312 would choose to talk with school personnel. There is no indication concerning the degree of effectiveness of the talks with various categories of individuals, but the survey results show a relatively low contact rate with school personnel who could be most helpful. Again, it is significant to note the number of students who indicate they would not discuss their decision with anyone, not even their family.

Family Profiles of Caprock High School Students

In an attempt to get an idea about the attitudes of families concerning school, the research team asked students if their parents had graduated from high school. The answers were somewhat similar, in that 58 percent of the mothers and 51 percent of the fathers had graduated from high school. In addition, the students were asked if any of their brothers and sisters had left school before graduating. Thirty-three percent of the 746

responding students answered affirmatively, while 66 percent replied that no one from their family had dropped out.

When ethnicity was used as a comparative factor to the formal educational achievement of the parents, the disparity between the ethnic groups was very apparent. Sixty-two percent of the white students reported that their fathers had graduated from high school, as compared to only 19 percent of the chicano students' fathers. As outlined earlier, more mothers had graduated from high school but the disparity between the educational level of the ethnic groups was still apparent since 69 percent of the white mothers, as compared to 27 percent of the chicano mothers, had reached that level of attainment.

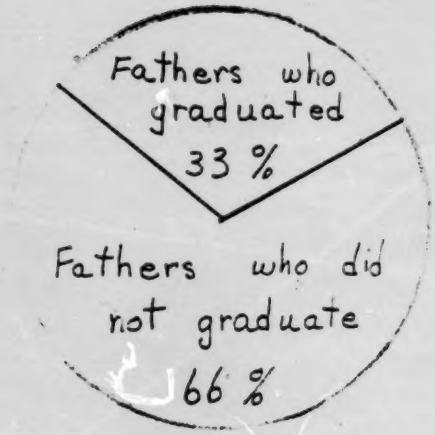
Ethnicity again seemed to be a determining factor when examined in relation to the number of siblings who had dropped out of school. Fifty percent of the chicano students said they had brothers and sisters who left school before graduating, while 28 percent of the white respondents reported the same degree of early termination in their families. Grade and sex of the Caprock students proved to be insignificant factors in relation to the educational level of the parents or the dropout rate of siblings.

It appears that students from families in which the father did not complete high school have a higher tendency to drop out than those families in which the fathers did complete their secondary education. Figure 2 shows the dropout rate of the siblings of Caprock students in comparison to their parents' educational level. According to the report of the students,

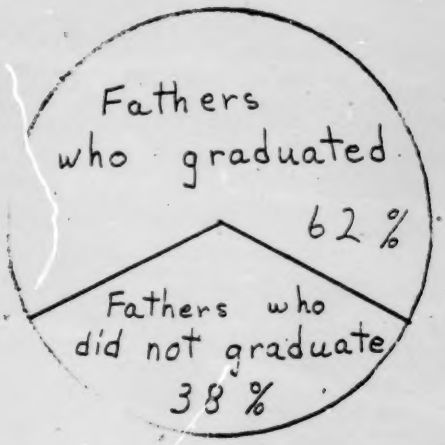
FIGURE 2

DROPOUT RATE OF STUDENTS' SIBLINGS AS COMPARED TO PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Fathers

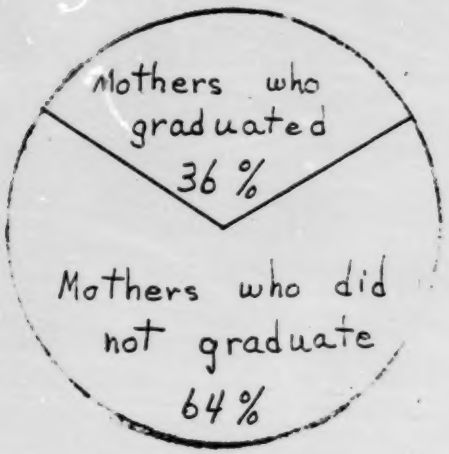


Students whose siblings dropped out

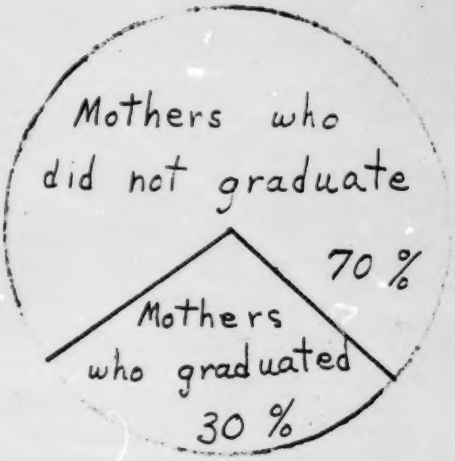


Students whose siblings have not dropped out

Mothers



Students whose siblings dropped out



Students whose siblings have not dropped out

only 33 percent of their siblings who left school prior to graduation had fathers who finished school. The survey results also showed that 62 percent of the students who reported no siblings leaving school had fathers who graduated from high school. The tendency for a higher drop out rate among their children was also demonstrated when compared to the mothers' level of education.

The results support the concept that if parents have not completed their secondary education their children have a higher probability of dropping out before graduation.

The research team was interested in determining some factors concerning the family structure. The question was asked, "Who are you living with at the present time?" In response, 67 percent indicated they were residing with their natural parents, and 11 percent with a parent and step-parent. An additional 11 percent said they were living with their mother only, 3 percent with their father only, and 4 percent with other relatives. An additional 4 percent reported other living arrangements.

When ethnicity was cross-tabulated with the living situations of students, it was apparent that the chicano students tend to live in a more traditional family structure than the white students do. Eighty-one percent of the chicanos were living with their natural parents, while 64 percent of the whites were residing with their natural parents. Fourteen percent of the white youth were living with a parent and step-parent, while only

2 percent of the chicanos reported residing in a similiar situation. A greater number of white students lived with their maternal parent than did chicano students, 12 percent as compared with 9 percent respectively. The students residing in other living situations were an insignificant portion of the total number of students.

A cross-study was done to determine if students who had worked during the school year had a tendency to be from any certain type of family situation. Results seem to indicate that living arrangements do not have much effect on whether or not the students were employed. Students living with a parent and step parent appeared to work slightly more frequently than those who live with natural parents (80 percent compared to 73 percent). The highest rate of employment was held by those few individuals who had living arrangements other than the categories listed on the survey. Seventy-seven percent of the students who resided with their paternal parent reported employment and 68 percent who lived with the paternal parent, although this latter group comprised only a few individuals. Of the few students living with a relative, 74 percent reported being employed.

Awareness About Team Resources for Youth

Team Resources for Youth was interested in determining how well known it was among the students at Caprock. Forty-five percent of the total number of respondents said they had heard of the organization before the survey. Seniors were somewhat more familiar with the agency than were the other class levels, 56 percent had heard of it as compared to approximately 42 percent

of students in the other grades. As a group, white students were somewhat more acquainted with TRY than chicano students were.

The research team was also interested in determining how the students received their knowledge of TRY. Only 325 of the 746 students who responded to the questionnaire indicated any source of information about TRY. It is apparent that for these students the school was the best mode of obtaining this information since the largest number (149) indicated that their knowledge of the agency was received through the school system. The next greatest number (91) indicated they received their information from a friend. Seventy-two expressed that the various news media were their sources while the remaining 59 received the knowledge from police, agencies, or other sources.

While the results indicate that the services of Team Resources for Youth are apparently not widely known among Caprock students, they also indicate that the school system is the source from which most of the student information was obtained.

V. CAPROCK DROPOUT SURVEY

Introduction

Students who drop out of high school before graduating are faced with problems which graduates may not encounter. One of these is difficulty in getting a job without a diploma or training. This results in financial problems and the individual's employment options are limited. Leaving school before graduating also indicates that the school has somehow not met that person's needs.

Team Resources for Youth was concerned about the tendency of some students to leave school and the research team decided to investigate some of the factors that might be involved in that decision. Therefore, a component of the total survey was a questionnaire which was mailed to all persons who had dropped out of Caprock High School during the school years 1978-79 and 1979-80.

Scope and Limitations

The records of Caprock High School were used to obtain the name and address, telephone number, race, sex, age and grade at the time of leaving school, and school assigned reasons for withdrawl for each student who had dropped out during the 1978-79 and 1979-80 school years. Dropouts were defined as those persons who left school before graduating and did not transfer to another school. Those individuals who left school but re-enrolled at a later date were considered to be dropouts for this study.

Questionnaires, approved by the school administration, were sent to three hundred sixty-two (362) people, along with a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. A cover letter describing the project was included with each questionnaire and assured the youth of anonymity and confidentiality. Examples of the cover letter and questionnaire are included in the appendix. Follow up telephone calls were made to those youth who had not returned their survey forms. However, personal visits to encourage return of the questionnaires were not made to any of the dropouts, since it was determined to be inappropriate to send the TRY youth employees unaccompanied to those homes. No attempt was made to locate individuals who had moved from the address on the school records.

During 1978-79 Caprock High School included some ninth graders in the student body. This makes comparison of total numbers of school population and dropouts for the two years misleading unless this factor is considered. Because the questionnaire needed to be completed before school was out, the cut off date for individuals included in the survey was April 18, 1980. The school enrollment figures used as a base for all calculations were as of October 2 of each year. Responses to open ended questions on the survey were generalized into categories and were coded for computer use.

There is a fallacy in generalizing from the small numbers of returns to this survey. However, the results may identify dropout tendencies which could be used as general indicators or outline areas that need to be studied further. It is possible that the individuals who responded to the questionnaire were those who felt most strongly in either a negative or positive way about school in general and dropping out. The low rate of questionnaire returns was probably affected by the negative feelings of the dropouts about school and a lack of interest in any school associated project.

Based on the responses to the open ended questions, it is possible to infer that the population which replied to the questionnaire tended to be more heavily representative of those who were sorry they had left school and those who were angry about the survey. It may not have been as strongly representative of the ex-student who is satisfied with his or her decision to leave school.

The results of this study cannot be generalized to any other population and the instrument has not been utilized on any other population.

Description of the Population

The student population at Caprock was 1,531 for 1978-79 which included 233 ninth graders, or 1,298 students in grades 10-12. In the 1979-80 school year the student population was nearly the same, 1,297 for grades sophomore thru senior.

Although Caprock is known in Amarillo as the high school with the most students of Mexican/American ancestory, they only make up about 25 percent of the total population (Table 7). Blacks comprised a very small portion of the student body (less than 2 percent) and there were only 3 students (less than 0.3 percent) of Vietnamese parentage. White youth made up approximately 75 percent of the total population. Both school years which were surveyed showed there were 8 percent more boys than girls in the population.

Table 7 outlines a description of the Caprock student population and it also compares it to the profile of the students who have dropped out of the school in the past two years, as well as to the youth who responded to the dropout survey. The 233 ninth graders enrolled in 1978-79 are not represented in Table 7 as it would be misleading to make comparisons between the two groups when they represented different total populations. Only 10-12 grade population statistics are included in this table of information.

However, the 1978-79 ninth graders accounted for 26 of the dropouts, 10 girls and 16 boys, or 13 percent of the total number

TABLE 7

DESCRIPTION OF CAPROCK POPULATION, CAPROCK DROPOUTS, AND CAPROCK DROPOUT RESPONDENTS, BY PERCENTAGES
10th - 12th Grades

	Caprock Population		Caprock Dropouts		Caprock Dropout Respondents
	1978-79	1979-80	1978-79	1979-80	Surveyed in 1980
SEX	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Male	54	54	45	54	42
Female	46	46	55	46	58
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100
RACE					
Chicano	24	25	29	32	21
Black	1	2	2	1	1
White & Others	75	73	69	67	77
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	99
GRADE					
10th	42	42	54	45	34
11th	33	33	28	41	38
12th	25	25	18	14	22
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	94*

*Does not include ninth grade respondents.

of students who left school without graduating that year. At that grade level more chicanos left than whites, 16 as compared to 10. There were no ninth grade blacks who dropped out that year. Only four of the ninth grade dropouts were over the compulsory school attendance age of 17 but 12 of them were 16 years old at the time they left school.

The dropout rates for Caprock for the two years were 13.7 percent of the 10-12 grade students in 1978-79 and 12.5 percent in 1979-80 (Table 8). Girls dropped out at a higher rate than boys and chicanos quit school at a greater rate than whites. In 1978-79, 18 percent of the tenth graders left school but the next year the rate for that grade level dropped to 13 percent. That same group of students, who had the highest rate in 1978-79, also had the highest rate of dropouts, based on the number of students in their class, the next year when they were eleventh graders.

State law requires school attendance until the age of 17. The study showed that 55 percent of the dropouts in 1978-79 were 17 or older at the time they felt school. During 1979-80 school year 58 percent were over the legal school leaving age.

TABLE 8

RATE OF DROPOUTS WHEN COMPARED TO ALL 10-12 GRADE STUDENTS

	1978-79	1979-80
	(%)	(%)
Dropout rate for all students	13.7	12.5
SEX		
Males	11	12
Females	17	13
RACE		
Chicano	17	16
Black	17*	10*
White and others	13	11
GRADE		
10th	18	13
11th	12	16
12th	9	7

*Number of students too small to be significant

Description of the Sample

Sixty-four out of a possible 362 persons answered the questionnaire for a return rate of 17.7 percent. Two questionnaires were not tabulated because of being returned late. Figure 3 outlines the characteristics of the respondents to the dropout survey. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents were female and the majority (77 percent) were of the white race. Chicanos comprised 21 percent of the youth who replied and only 2 percent were black. In answering the questionnaire whites seemed more inclined to respond, since they represented a larger portion of the replies than of the overall group who had dropped out.

The largest number of these ex-students (32 percent) were 17 years old at the time they left school. Sixteen was the age when the next greatest number of respondents had departed from Caprock. The survey asked what grade the students were in at the time they left school. Of the ex-students who returned the survey, 39 percent had been juniors at the time they dropped out. The next largest number of respondents had been at the sophomore level (34 percent) while 23 percent of those replying to the questionnaire had been seniors. Only 5 percent had left when they were freshmen in the 1978-79 school year.

A cross-tabulation was done comparing sex with the grade that the student was in at the time he/she left school. Of the 64 youth who responded to the questionnaire, females made up 76 percent of those who left at the tenth grade level. In the eleventh grade the trend was reversed and 67 percent of the dropouts were males. Females again left at a higher rate (71 percent) in the twelfth

FIGURE 1

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DROPOUT STUDY RESPONDENTS

SEX	Male 42%	Female 58%				
RACE	White 77%	Chicano 21%	Black 2%			
AGE AT TIME OF SURVEY	15 2%	16 23%	17 25%	18 30%	19 16%	20 5%
AGE AT TIME OF DROPPING OUT	15 8%	16 27%	17 32%	18 21%	19 5%	20 6%
GRADE AT TIME OF DROPPING OUT	9th 5%	10th 34%	11th 39%	12th 23%		
MONTHS OUT OF SCHOOL	0-3 29%	3-6 21%	6-1yr 27%	over 1yr 21%		
MARITAL STATUS	Married 29%	Single 71%				
RESIDING WITH	Parents 55%	Spouse 24%	Friend 8%	Other 13%		

grade. Ninth grade leavers who responded to the questionnaire comprised very few individuals and the trend would not be reliable.

In regard to the length of time the students had been out of school there was a fairly equal representation from all groups as can be seen in Figure 3. The two year drop out period was divided into four time subdivisions. In regard to marital status, of the 62 respondents only 18 indicated they were married at the time of the survey.

The research team was interested in knowing what the current living arrangements of the dropouts were. Fifty-five percent of the respondents were living with their parents at the time of the survey, while 24 percent indicated that he or she was living with a spouse. Eight percent were residing with friends and the remaining 13 percent had various other living arrangements.

Employment

The research team wanted to know how successful the dropouts had been at finding employment since leaving school. Thirty-eight (61 percent) of the 62 students reported that they were working at the time of the survey and 58 percent of those ex-students were males. The individuals were asked whether they were working full or part-time. Of the 19 persons who answered that item, 15 reported that they were working full-time but there were an additional 19 working respondents who did not indicate the amount of time spent on the job.

Those individuals who were working at the time of the survey were asked to indicate whether or not they have had a job since

leaving high school. Of the 28 who responded, 68 percent said they had previously held a job. The students who were not working were asked whether or not they were seeking employment and only 11 persons said they were looking for work. The study also showed that 7 of the people who were looking for work were females. Of the eleven people who were seeking employment, approximately one-half said they would take any kind of work.

It is interesting to note that the employment rate of the dropout respondents (61 percent) is lower than the rate of employment for the Caprock school population (75 percent). However, the employment rate for the Caprock population was based on having held a job at some time during the school year.

It was believed that knowing the types of jobs which early school leavers actually were employed at, would be of interest to persons working with this high risk group. The largest portion of the dropouts (35 percent) reported that they were in service type jobs. About half as many worked in construction and the next largest group (13 percent) were unskilled laborers (Figure 4).

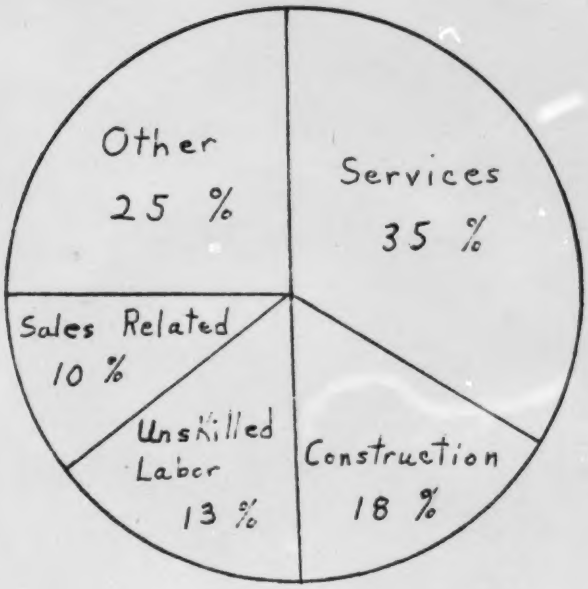
In regard to wages, the survey results demonstrated that about 74 percent of the ex-students who reported being employed were earning less than $4 per hour. Only 17 percent were earning over $5 an hour and these individuals mostly worked in the construction field (Figure 4).

Reasons for Dropping Out and Resource People Utilized For This Problem

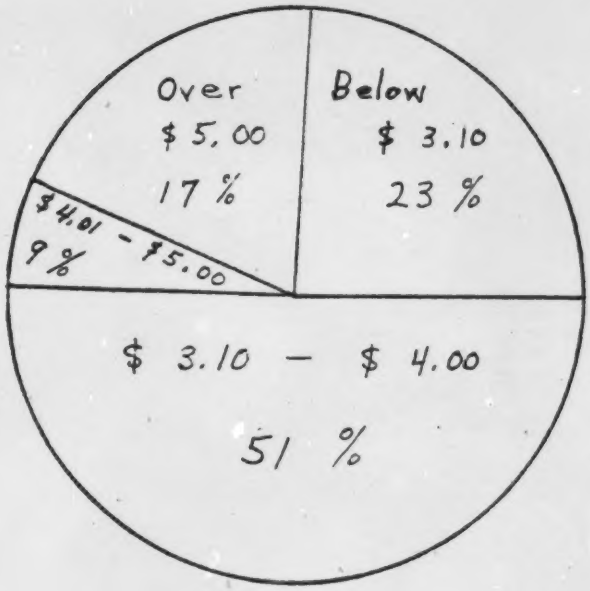
Former students were asked what were some of the major reasons involved with their decision to leave school. They were able to

FIGURE 4

TYPES OF JOBS AND WAGES OF DROPOUTS



TYPE OF JOB



WAGES

check multiple responses to the question. The ex-students averaged between 2-3 choices each (Table 9). The reason most frequently checked was poor grades with 25 responses. A close second with 21 responses was that they left school to go to work. As would be expected by those who work with high risk students, family conflict was an influencing factor for a number of the students and school discipline difficulties were indicated as a motivating factor to leave school by several others. Financial problems, marriage and/or pregnancy, feeling left out, and influence of friends were also designated as reasons to leave Caprock. A few said that they left to join the military, because of advice from a counselor, principal or vice principal, or because of general disinterest in school.

At the time of withdrawl from school, the vice principals determine what they feel the main reasons are which cause the student to leave school. Some students were classified as having more than one major reason for leaving school. Table 10 outlines the reasons for leaving school as determined by Caprock administration for all 10-12 grade dropouts for the 78-79 and 79-80 school years.

The possible Amarillo Independent School District withdrawl codes are: physical, mental, economic, marriage and/or pregnancy, under-achiever/over-age, lack of communication skills, disciplinary action, curriculum unsuited to pupil's needs, court jurisdiction, unknown and other. The "other" catagory includes runaway, parental permission, parental request, and nonattendance.

TABLE 9

REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL AS REPORTED BY THE DROPOUTS

REASON	NUMBER OF TIMES GIVEN*
Poor grades	25
To go to work	21
Family conflict	15
School discipline problems	15
Financial problems	15
Other	15
Marriage/pregnancy	14
Feeling left out	12
Influence of friends	6
Advice from counselor, principal, or vice principal	4
To join military	4
General disinterest in school	4
Trouble with the law	3
Health reasons	2

*In some cases more than one reason was given as an explanation for a student's leaving school.

TABLE 10

REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL AS DETERMINED BY CAPROCK ADMINISTRATION FOR 10-12 GRADE DROPOUTS

	YEAR	
	1978-79	1979-80
Total number of dropouts	179	162
REASONS	NUMBER OF TIMES ASSIGNED*	
Nonattendance	34	47
Economic	36	40
Marriage/pregnancy	27	27
Parent request	20	19
Parent permission	30	16
Unknown	11	3
Court jurisdiction	2	3
Under-achiever/over-age	38	2
Disciplinary action	3	2
Physical	4	2
Mental	0	0
Lack of communication skills	2	0
Curriculum unsuited to needs	6	0
Runaway	8	7
Other	35	5

*In some cases more than one reason was given as an explanation for a student's leaving school.

Of the dropouts who responded to the survey, economic reasons were listed, according to administration records, for twelve of those students. Marriage and/or pregnancy was a reason given for eleven ex-students, twelve terminated with parents' permission, eight left because of their parents' request. Only three of the respondents were classified as runaways. Non-attendance was a reason for dismissal for ten students according to school records.

When asked to describe what program might have kept them in school, respondents' answers varied. Nineteen percent replied that nothing would have helped, while 11 percent suggested that more variety offered in the curriculum would have encouraged them to stay in school. Ten percent wished there had been more understanding on the part of the administration. A variety of other responses were checked by small numbers of people, but 26 percent did not answer that question at all.

The research team was interested in knowing with whom the dropouts had discussed their plans to leave school. The respondents could check more than one answer and the results showed that 19 individuals, which is 31 percent of the dropouts who replied, said they had not spoken to anyone about their decision. The largest number (24) indicated they had discussed their plans with family members. Almost as many (22) replied that they had talked with their principal or vice principal. Contrary to what might have been expected, only 5 people indicated that they spoke about leaving with a counselor at school. A few (6) said they had discussed their plans with a teacher and another 9 had input from their

friends in making their decision. Of the 19 youth who had not talked to anyone about their decision, 63 percent felt that had made a wrong decision in leaving school. Fifty-two percent of those who had discussed it with someone else thought they had made a wrong decision.

When these results from the dropout survey are compared with the way that the Caprock students think they would handle a dropout situation, some interesting factors are seen. Both the dropouts and the students see their families as the people with whom they most frequently discuss the situation. Opinions of their friends rated much higher with the students than what was actually reported by the dropouts. The dropouts reported a higher rate of conferring with the principal or vice principal before withdrawing if they do, in fact, come to the school to withdraw. Talking with a counselor was chosen more often by the general student population than it appears to have occured with the dropouts. Perhaps the most significant information from those two portions of the study is: while 11 percent of the total responses on the Caprock questionnaire indicated the student would not talk with anyone, in actuality, 31 percent of the dropout respondents report they did not talk with anyone about leaving school.

Those who had dropped out of school early were asked if they had been encouraged to leave school and if so by whom. Seventy-four percent replied they had not been encouraged to leave by anyone. Of those who reported encouragement to withdraw, this advise was reported to have come about equally from among vice principals, parents and families.

In response to the question concerning whether or not the dropout was having problems with his or her family at the time he or she left school, 27 percent said they were having family problems. It is interesting to note that of the people who reported these family problems, 71 percent were girls.

While this trend may be interesting, to attach significant meaning to these figures would necessitate knowing the degree of family problem situations among the students who did not leave school. That subject was beyond the scope of this study.

Involvement in Activities

It is a common assumption that students who are satisfied at school tend to be involved in school sponsored activities. With this idea in mind, the research team asked the respondents to indicate their level of participation in activities while they were in school.

The survey showed that 53 percent of the 62 dropout respondents reported they were not involved in any school activities. This can be compared with the results from the survey of the Caprock student body which showed that 23 percent of the 746 respondents were not participating in any activities. The rate of participation at the one activity level was much the same between the two groups, 32 and 36 percent (Table 11). At the higher participation levels, 2 or more activities, the difference between those who had left school and the regular student body was sizable. Forty-one percent of the general student population were involved in two or more activities, while only 13 percent of the dropouts had been that busy with school activities.

TABLE 11

INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES BY CAPROCK STUDENTS AND DROPOUTS

Number of activities	Caprock Students (percent of respondents)	Dropouts (percent of respondents)
	(%)	(%)
No activities	23	53
1 activity	36	32
2 activities	23	10
3 or more activities	18	3
Total	100	98

This study seems to confirm the assumption that students who dropout tend to be less involved in school sponsored activities than students who remain in school.

A cross-tabulation was done to determine if there was a relationship between the presence or absence of family problems as compared to the number of activities in which the students were involved. No relationship was shown between those two factors in this study.

Educational Plans and Satisfaction with Dropping out

The survey asked whether or not the Caprock dropouts had gone on to any other type of schooling. The results showed that 7 people, of the 62 respondents who had dropped out of Caprock, were attending a high school at the time of the study. An additional five were currently working to get their General Equivilancy Diploma, GED. Of those who indicated whether or not they planned to return to high school, 43 respondents (69 percent) said they had no plans to go back at any time. However, the remaining 13 stated that they plan to return to high school at some time.

In response to the question concerning whether or not they planned to get a GED, 63 percent responded positively when they indicated that they planned to get this diploma. Eight percent of the respondents already had earned their GED. The remainder either did not reply to that question, did not know or indicated they did not plan to get it.

In order to better understand the position of the school dropout group, the respondents were asked how they felt now about

leaving school. In response to the question asking whether or not they believed they had made the right decision in leaving school, based on what they knew at the time of the survey, 48 percent said they had made the right decision.. Forty-five percent believed they had erred in leaving school. Those students involuntarily withdrawn from school comprised 3 percent of the sample and another 3 percent made no response. To generalize, about one-half felt they had made the right decision and the other half were not satisfied with their choice.

Family Profiles of Caprock Dropouts

The research team wanted to compare the educational level of the parents of the dropouts with that of the parents of the Caprock student population. Therefore, the dropouts were asked whether or not their parents had graduated from high school. Sixty-five percent of those who responded to the dropout study said their fathers had not graduated from high school and 63 percent of the mothers had not finished their secondary education. The mothers attended college at a slightly higher rate than the fathers, 16 percent compared to 11 percent.

The results from the dropout study are very comparable with those from the Caprock student survey in which the students, who had siblings who dropped out of school, said that 67 percent of their fathers had not graduated and 64 percent of their mothers had not completed their secondary education either (Figure 5).

The high school dropouts were also asked to indicate the last grade their parents had completed if they did not graduate.

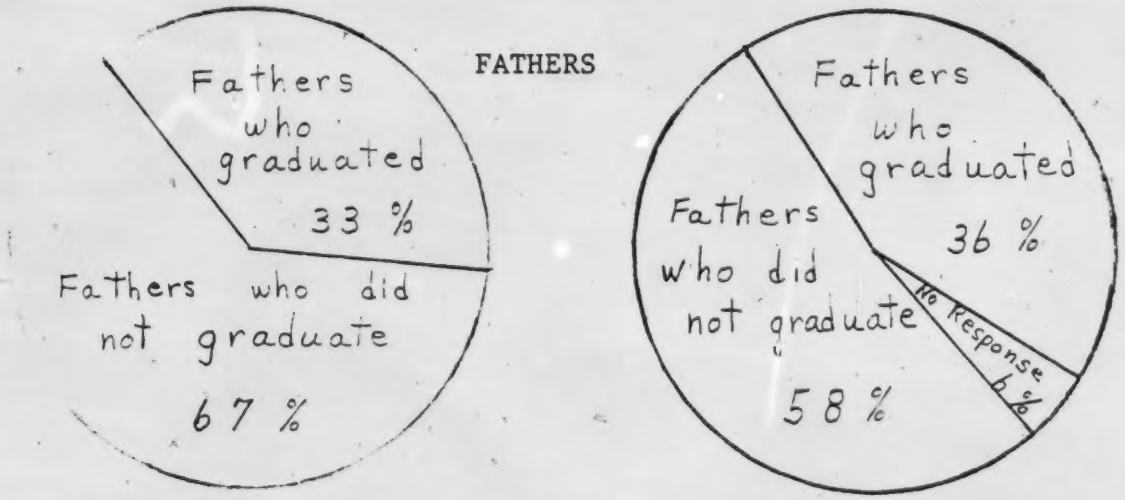
FIGURE 5

COMPARISON OF THE PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL WITH CAPROCK DROPOUTS AND CAPROCK STUDENTS' WHOSE SIBLINGS HAVE DROPPED OUT

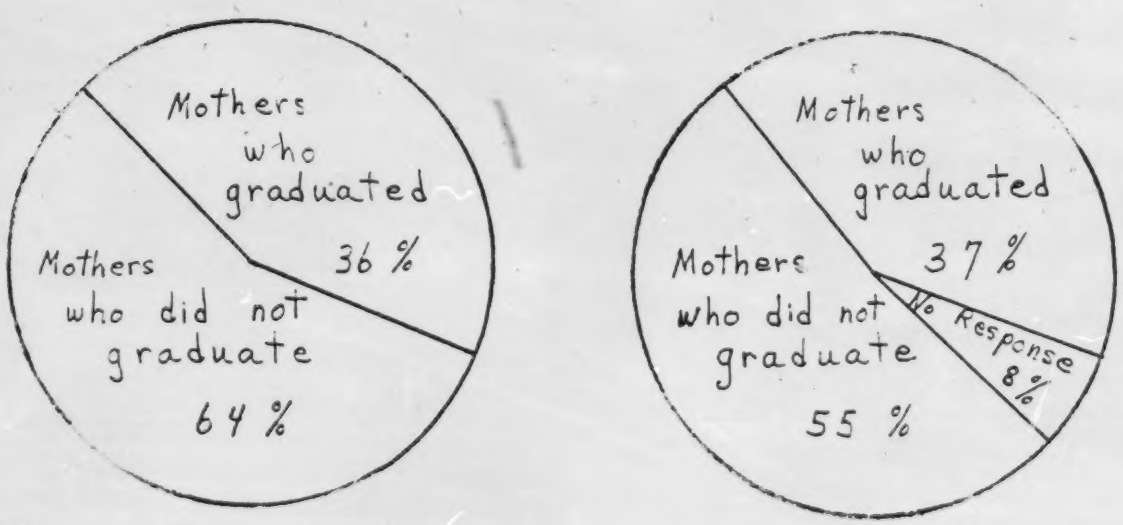
CAPROCK STUDENTS WHOSE SIBLINGS HAVE DROPPED OUT

CAPROCK DROPOUT RESPONDENTS

FATHERS



MOTHERS



Of the 40 fathers who did not graduate, 17 completed eighth grade or less and 10 more quit before finishing high school. The dropouts said that 34 of them had mothers who did not graduate and of those, 10 left school in the eighth grade or before and an additional 19 did not complete high school. Some students did not indicate the last grade their parents completed.

The survey asked the dropouts about their parents' occupations. The largest number of fathers were employed as craft and kindred workers, which includes carpenters, construction craftworkers, mechanics, and similar occupations. The greatest number of mothers worked as housewives.

Table 12 is based largely on the Department of Labor job classifications which were used in the survey. Besides craft workers, some of the other most common occupations for fathers were machine operators and manufacturing laborers. While the largest group of mothers worked as housewives, 23 percent were sales and clerical workers and an additional 13 percent worked as managers and administrators. Generally speaking, the fathers mostly were working in blue collar jobs, while the mothers, who were working outside the home, were employed largely in sales and clerical jobs, as service workers which included private household workers, or as managers or administrators.

At the end of the questionnaire there was a space for the youth to make any further comments if they chose to do so. Forty-eight percent of the 62 respondents made no response but 16 percent indicated that they now realized the importance of

TABLE 12

OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS OF CAPROCK DROPOUTS

Occupations	Fathers Percent of Total Respondents (%)	Mothers Percent of Total Respondents (%)
Professional and technical workers	2	3
Managers and administrators	16	13
Sales and clerical workers	3	23
Craft and kindred workers	18	0
Operatives and manufacturing workers	15	2
Non-farm laborors	16	8
Private household workers	0	0
Services workers	3	16
Housewives	0	31
Unemployed	8	0
Deceased	6	0
No response	11	5
Total	98	101

school and 8 percent indicated that they were satisfied with having left school. The responses of about 6 percent reflected that they had problems with authority figures and a few, about 3 percent, were angry about the questionnaire. Some indicated they had trouble with teachers or wanted a more understanding administration at the school.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The sample of Caprock students who responded to the school survey seemed to be representative of the Caprock student population. Perhaps the respondents to the dropout protion were not as representative of the total dropout population from the school. Because of this, the results of that section of the study must be viewed with the low return rate in mind. However, definite trends seem to be indicated in this study.

White students comprise 70-75 percent of the Caprock student body while chicanos make up about 25 percent of the Caprock population. There are only a few blacks in the student body. Enrollment statistics from both years that were studied showed there were more boys in each class than girls. It was beyond the scope of this study to determine if this is a persistent pattern at the school, whether more girls have already left school at junior high levels, and whether or not there is a similar pattern in other city high schools.

The dropout rate for Caprock High School was 13.7 percent for the 1978-79 school year and 12.5 percent for 1979-80. Chicanos drop out at a higher rate than whites, girls leave more frequently

than boys, and the largest number of the dropouts leave in the tenth grade.

As a group, the Caprock students seem to have a fairly positive attitude about their school. They feel it has a good reputation and most seem to think that going to school is the best way they can be spending their time. It would be interesting to know whether the more positive feelings of students at the higher grade levels are due to a change in attitude or the loss of the students with the negative attitudes to the ranks of the dropouts. While as a group they generally had a positive attitude about their school, they were not quite as satisfied with their own performance in school.

The greatest proportion of students say they are in school to get an education and to prepare for a job. Their responses seem to be consistent with their plans for the first year after leaving school, since most students expect to either go to college or to work. The majority of these students feel they will be well prepared to carry out their plans for either further education or work upon leaving school.

In regard to the discipline in the school, approximately one-half of the students felt that discipline was always fair or usually fair. However, they did not view the consistency of the discipline quite as positively. These opinions on the part of the students may not be as negative as they seem since discipline should be administered with the individual in mind.

It would appear that the Caprock students have a fairly high rate of employment. In fact, this rate of employment is higher

than the rate of those dropouts who responded to the dropout survey. The students expressed a very high degree of interest in learning about the skills needed in applying and interviewing for jobs. Since most students plan to enter the work force, these seem to be appropriate skills to teach in the general school curriculum. This approach seems to be indicated since many students do not participate in work/vocational programs.

While activities at the high school seem to be important to most students, there were about one out of four students who were not involved in any school sponsored activities. There was an apparent inconsistency between the stated importance of activities and actual participation, especially at the low involvement levels. Some dropouts said that one of the reasons they left school was because of feeling left out of the school group. Knowing the importance of peer relationships at that age, some further emphasis might be made toward incorporating marginal students into activities, especially since the dropouts, as a group, had a very low involvement rate in activities.

The dropout survey and the student survey both indicate there are a sizeable number of youth who did not, or think they will not, talk to anyone about their decision to leave school. By doing this they will be denying themselves help from individuals who might assist them in resolving their problems. In some instances school personnel are apparently not viewed as "helping individuals" by students.

Some interesting facts have come to light about the students' families. As a group, slightly more than half of the parents did graduate from high school. However, parents of chicano students

had a much lower rate of graduation from high school. One-third of the Caprock students reported they had siblings who had dropped out of school and that dropout rate was higher for chicanos and students whose parents had not graduated from high school. The dropout portion of the project confirmed this low graduation rate among parents of dropouts. It appears that a student, whose parents or siblings have not finished school, has a psychological hurdle in addition to any other problems he or she may have.

The greatest number of students who dropped out said they did so because of low academic performance. This was also the reason that most current Caprock students felt would cause them to leave school. Family conflict was one of the major factors involved with the students' decisions to leave school. Effective aid, which could be given through the schools or social service agencies to help resolve these problems, might influence a reduction in the dropout rate.

According to school records, economic reasons were only second to nonattendance as causes for students to leave school. A number of respondents to the dropout survey indicated they left school to go to work or because of financial problems and these results appear to validate school records.

The majority of the dropouts who responded to the survey reported they were working in sales, services or unskilled labor jobs and were earning less than $4 per hour.

A considerable number of Caprock girls indicated that if they were pregnant they felt it would be a reason causing them to quit school. Although school personnel advise pregnant girls about the alternative ways to continue their education, it is probable that some girls do not inform them of the real reason for withdrawl and therefore are not aware of the alternatives available. The girls need to be aware of these options prior to the time when they are making their decision to withdraw. An educational program at the junior and senior high level may be indicated to make this information more widely available.

The dropouts, as a group, did not seem to have a consensus as to what might have helped them to stay in school. Quite a number felt that nothing would have helped to keep them in school but on the whole their needs seemed to be individualized. About half of the dropout respondents expressed satisfaction with their decision to leave school and the other half felt it had been a wrong decision on their part.

Only a minority of the Caprock High School students who responded to the questionnaire had heard about Team Resources for Youth and for them the schools had been their major sources of information. It appears that in regard to reaching the youth of the community, the most effective route for TRY to utilize in publicizing their services is through school channels.

This project has been successful in fulfilling the goal of providing an opportunity for the youth to learn new skills and have some input into a project which affects youth in this community. The youth employees have shown that they can, with guidance, set

goals and priorities, work out a plan of action, revise it when needed and complete a job which they set out to do. This project seems to be an appropriate one for youth involvement and this one, or a similar study, is well within the capacity of high school youth.

APPENDIX

CAPROCK STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

GRADE	RACE	SEX
1. ____ Sophmore	1. ____ White	1. ____ Male
2. ____ Junior	2. ____ Chicano	2. ____ Female
3. ____ Senior	3. ____ Black	
	4. ____ Other	
	AGE ____	

DIRECTIONS: In each question below check one item that reflects your opinion unless other directions are given.

5. In comparison with other high schools, what kind of reputation do you think Caprock has?

   1. ____ Excellent
   2. ____ Good
   3. ____ Adequate
   4. ____ Fair
   5. ____ Poor

6. How important are school activities to you?

   1. ____ Very important
   2. ____ Fairly important
   3. ____ Somewhat important
   4. ____ Not very important
   5. ____ Not important at all

7. How many school activities (band, sports, clubs, etc.) are you involved in?

   1. ____ None
   2. ____ One
   3. ____ Two
   4. ____ Three or more

8. How important do you think the things you are learning in school now are going to be for you later in life?

   1. ____ Very important
   2. ____ Quite important
   3. ____ Somewhat important
   4. ____ Slightly important
   5. ____ Not at all important

9. What do you plan to do within the first year after you leave high school? Check those that apply.

1. ____ Go to work
2. ____ Not work
3. ____ Get married
4. ____ Join the military
5. ____ Go to college
6. ____ Go to trade or vocational school
7. ____ Not sure
8. ____ Other (specify) _____

_____

10. How well do you think you will be prepared to do what you plan when you leave Caprock?

1. ____ Very well prepared
2. ____ Well prepared
3. ____ Somewhat prepared
4. ____ Poorly prepared
5. ____ Not at all prepared

11. Are you involved in a work study or vocational training program now?

1. ____ Yes 2. ____ No

12. Do you think it's important to learn about job applications and interviewing in school?

1. ____ Yes 2. ____ No

13. Have you had any instruction in school about how to fill out a job application or about interviewing for a job?

1. ____ Yes 2. ____ No

14. Do you have now, or have you had, a job during this school year?

1. ____ Yes 2. ____ No

15. If you are working, why do you work?

1. ____ To help support my family
2. ____ To buy my clothes and school supplies
3. ____ For my recreational needs
4. ____ For the experience
5. ____ Other

16. What are the major reasons that you attend school? Check the ones that are important to you.

1. ____ To get an education
2. ____ To prepare for a job
3. ____ It's required by law
4. ____ To be with my friends
5. ____ To be in the activities (sports, clubs, band, etc.)
6. ____ Because my parents make me
7. ____ Other (specify) _____

_____

17. In general, do you agree or disagree, that going to school is the best way you can be spending your time now?

1. ____ Strongly agree
2. ____ Agree
3. ____ Don't know
4. ____ Disagree
5. ____ Strongly disagree

18. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way you are actually performing in school?

1. ____ Very satisfied
2. ____ Fairly satisfied
3. ____ Satisfied
4. ____ Dissatisfied
5. ____ Very dissatisfied

19. How often do you do the best work you are able to do in school?

1. ____ All the time
2. ____ Most of the time
3. ____ Sometimes
4. ____ Seldom
5. ____ Never

20. Do you think the discipline at school is fair? (ie, students get what they deserve)

1. ____ Always
2. ____ Usually
3. ____ Sometimes
4. ____ Seldom
5. ____ Never

21. Do you think the discipline at school is consistent? (ie, the same for everyone)

1. ____ Always
2. ____ Usually
3. ____ Sometimes
4. ____ Seldom
5. ____ Never

22. If you had a problem in school, which of these people would you go to? Check the ones that apply.

1. ____ A teacher
2. ____ A coach
3. ____ A counselor
4. ____ A vice principal
5. ____ The principal
6. ____ A friend
7. ____ None of the above

23. Listed below are some of the reasons people drop out of school. Check the ones that you think might cause you to drop out of school if they happened to you.

1. ____ Parents want student to leave school and work
2. ____ Needed money and could get a job
3. ____ Family arguing and fighting
4. ____ Failing too many subjects
5. ____ School discipline problems
6. ____ Best friends quit school
7. ____ Marriage
8. ____ Pregnancy (only girls answer)

24. If you were thinking of dropping out of school, who would you discuss it with? Check ones that apply.

1. ____ Family
2. ____ Teacher
3. ____ Counselor
4. ____ Friends
5. ____ Principal or vice principal
6. ____ No one
7. ____ Other (specify) _____

25.-26. Did your parents graduate from high school?

Father	1. ____ Yes	Mother	1. ____ Yes
	2. ____ No		2. ____ No

27. Do you have any brothers or sisters who left school before graduating?

1. ____ Yes
2. ____ No

28. Who are you living with at the present time?

1. ____ Natural parents
2. ____ Natural parent and step-parent
3. ____ Mother only
4. ____ Father only
5. ____ Relative
6. ____ Other

29. Have you heard about Team Resources for Youth (TRY) before this survey?

1. ____ Yes
2. ____ No

30. If yes, how did you get the information?

1. ____ A friend
2. ____ Television
3. ____ Newspaper
4. ____ Radio
5. ____ School
6. ____ Police or agency
7. ____ Other

THANK YOU

CAPROCK RESEARCH TEAM
3001 EAST 34th STREET
AMARILLO, TEXAS 79103

TO: Non-graduating students of Caprock
FROM: Caprock Research Team
SUBJECT: Questionaire
DATE: March 31, 1980

A survey is being conducted at Caprock High School and your help is needed in discovering why people leave school. This is being done by Team Resources for Youth, with the cooperation of the school district. The questionaire is being sent to non-graduating students from the past two years. The study is designed to determine the attitude of the students who left school and try to decrease the number of future dropouts.

You are very important to this survey and your knowledge of student problems will be used to better the school climate. Your assistance in filling out and returning this questionaire will be kept confidential.

Please check or fill in the appropriate blanks on the following questionaire. When completed return at your earliest convenience. A stamped self-addressed evelope is enclosed. We appreciate your help in filling out this questionaire.

Caprock Research Team

CAPROCK HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY OF NON-GRADUATING STUDENTS

Please check or fill in the appropriate blanks.

1. Age___ 2. Sex: (1)___Male (2)___Female

3. Race: (1)___White (2)___Chicano (3)___Black
(4)___Oriental (5)___Other (specify)_____

4. Are you married? (1)...Yes (2)___No

5. Whom are you living with at the present time? _____

6. How long has it been since you've left school?
(1)___0 to 3 months (2)___3 to 6 months (3)___6 months to 1 year
(4)___Over 1 year

7. Are you working now? (1)___Yes (2)___No (3)___Full-time (4)___Part-time

8. If working, what kind of job are you doing?
(1)___Office and Secretarial
(2)___Health Services
(3)___Data Processing & Key Punch
(4)___Custodial or Domestic
(5)___Unskilled Labor
(6)___Sales
(7)___Services (food service, teacher's aide, etc...)
(8)___Other (specify_____

9. What are your wages per hour? $_____

10. If you are not working, are you looking for work? (1)___Yes (2)___No

11. If yes, what kind? _____

12. If you are not working now, have you had a job since leaving high school?
(1)___Yes (2)___No

13-14. What are some of the major reasons involved with your decision to leave school? Check those that apply.
(1)___Marriage and/or pregnancy
(2)___Family conflict
(3)___School discipline problems
(4)___Advice from counselor, principal, or vice-principal
(5)___Feeling left out
(6)___Influence of friends
(7)___To join the military
(8)___Financial problems
(9)___Poor grades
(10)___To go to work
(11)___Health reasons
(12)___Parental influence
(13)___Trouble with the law
(14)___Other (specify)_____

15. Were you having problems with your family at the time you dropped out of school?
(1)___Yes (2)___No

16. Describe any program or assistance that could have helped you stay in school.

_____

17. With whom did you talk about leaving school?
(1)___Counselor (5)___No one
(2)___Family (6)___Principal or
(3)___Friends Vice-Principal
(4)___Teacher (7)___Other (specify)_____

18. Were you encouraged to leave school? (1)___Yes (2)___No
If so by whom?_____

19. What grade were you in when you left school?
(1)___9 (2)___10 (3)___11 (4)___12

20. Are you going to school now? (1)___Yes (2)___No

21. Do you plan to go back to high school? (1)___Yes (2)___ No

22. Do you plan to get your GED? (1)___Yes (2)___No

23. If you are attending school now, what kind?
(1)___A public high school in Amarillo (4)___College
(2)___Private high school (5)___Technical or trade
(3)___GED program (6)___Business or secretarial
(7)___Other (specify)_____

24. How many school activities were you involved in at Caprock?
(1)___0 (2)___1 (3)___2 (4)___3 or more

25. Based on what you know now, do you feel that you made the right decision in leaving school? (1)___Yes (2)___ No

26-27. Did your parents graduate from high school? Father (1)___Yes (2)___No
Mother (1)___Yes (2)___No

28-29. If not what grade did they last complete? (1)___Father
(2)___Mother

30-31. Did your parents attend college? Father (1)___Yes (2)___No
Mother (1)___Yes (2)___No

32. What are your parents' occupations?
(1) Father_____
(2) Mother_____

33. If you have any further comments please state here._____
_____

Please return this questionnaire in the stamped, self addressed envelope to the Caprock Research Project at your earliest convenience.

THANK YOU

PROFILES OF THE RESEARCH TEAM

Randi DeVine finished her sophomore year at Caprock. She participated in several organizations, such as Future Teachers of America (F.T.A.), Spanish Club, Anchor Club and orcherstra. She plans to attend college after graduating. Randi has learned new skills and intends to utilize them on future projects. Through this study, she has improved her ability to relate to people, read computer sheets, tabulate information, and revise plans. Her expectations for the project were not fulfilled in these areas: not being able to incorporate interviewing of school personnel and students into the project, the low rate of return on the dropout questionnaire, not being able to do a teacher survey, and being unable to complete the study in the time designated at the beginning of the project.

Frank Hernandez has graduated from Caprock, plans to attend college, and is interested in veterinary medicine. While in high school he was active in ROTC and had been in band. Some of the outstanding parts of the project, as far as Frank was concerned, were discovering how different peoples' points of view could be. He felt he had learned skills in how to approach and work with other people, to make telephone contacts, some interviewing skills and learning to write questionnaires. He was interested in the training sessions with other youth employees and the opportunity to meet resource people from outside of the agency. Frank wanted to have the opportunity to conduct interviews with the students and would have liked to have arranged more local publicity about the project.

Paula Leasure also completed her sophomore year at Caprock. She participated in F.T.A., where she served as treasurer. After leaving school she anticipates going to college. Paula mastered many new skills including the abilities to work well with others, compile data, decipher computer sheets, and to function well with a supervisor in a working atmosphere. Among the disappointments of the project she includes the following: the delayed finishing time of the project, the low return rate of the dropout questionnaire, not being able to interview students or do a teacher survey. She hopes she will be able to utilize her new skills in later life.

Donna Luna was a sophomore at Caprock last year. She had participated in Future Homemakers of America and played the flute in Caprock's band. After graduating from high school she plans to attend college. Donna has acquired knowledge on how to communicate with others and learned proficiency in several skills. Some of the disappointments of the project include not being able to do the teacher interviews and the delays involved in finishing the total project.

Susan Thurston has completed her sophomore year. In school she was involved in Anchor Club and was a Student Council Representative. When she graduates she wants to be either a caseworker or probation officer. Susan indicated she received great satisfaction from doing the project. She enjoyed getting to know new people and having a chance to work with others.

Tim Weaver finished his high school education at Caprock. He has no plans for further formal education at this time but would like to travel around the country and is interested in learning to

weld. He likes sports and demonstrated that by being involved in football, baseball, basketball, and track in high school. Journalism was another of his school interests and racing cars are one of his hobbies.

According to Tim, the project gave him an opportunity to work with some new people and to become more aware of the differences in peoples' opinions and attitudes. He felt he developed some new communication skills and worked independently and with a group. The possibility of conducting a teacher questionnaire interested him and he would have liked to have seen that goal accomplished.

Ann Fulton is a graduate nurse who also has a masters degree in education. She is particularly interested in the field of counseling and enjoys working with youth. Through this project she has seen a group of students take on a project, set some goals, and learn how to work toward them. The quality of the students' work was impressive to her as well as the development of the group as a working unit. To her it was gratifying to see the growth in skills shown by these students and the satisfaction they seemed to feel in accomplishing things which they had set out to do. The disappointments of the project were experiences in facing the realities of the working world. It was an experience which gives her confidence concerning the abilities of youth if given the opportunity and the necessary assistance.